

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 12928 091808Z

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 PM-04 INR-07 L-03 ACDA-07

NSAE-00 PA-01 SS-15 PRS-01 SP-02 USIA-06 TRSE-00

SAJ-01 DODE-00 NSC-05 /065 W
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R 091630Z AUG 76

FM AMEMBASSY ROME

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9337

INFO USMISSION NATO

ZEN AMCONSUL MILAN 5050

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 12928

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: SENV, IT, US

1. I PAID AN INITIAL CALL ON NEW FONMIN FORLANI AUGUST 5.
FORLANI IS OLD FRIEND FROM HIS DAYS AS MINISTER OF DEFENSE
AND I SPENT WELL OVER AN HOUR WITH HIM.

2. FOLLOWING THE AMENITIES, AND AS FIRST ITEM OF BUSINESS,
I EXPRESSED OUR DISAPPOINTMENT AT GOI'S FAILURE TO DAMPEN
PRESS SPECULATION TO EFFECT US AND NATO INVOLVED WITH ICMESA
TCDD PROBLEM NEAR MILAN. GOI'S FAILURE TO PLACE TRAGEDY IN ITS
PROPER PERSPECTIVE PUBLICLY IN FACE OF DISTORTED AND OUT-
RAGIOUSLY ERRONEOUS PRESS REPORTS LED TO AUGUST 3 EXPRESSO
ARTICLE WHICH WENT SO FAR AS TO INVENT A NATO RESPONSIBILITY
FOR AND BY CLEAR IMPLICATION US INVOLVEMENT IN THE ACCIDENT.
I STRESSED TO FORLANI THAT I HAD RECEIVED THREE TELEPHONE CALLS
FROM THREE DIFFERENT MINISTERIES ASKING FOR HELP, AND THE GOI
SHOULD MAKE IT CLEAR TO PRESS THAT ALLIANCE AND US BECAME
INVOLVED ONLY IN RESPONSE TO DIRECT REQUEST FROM GOI.

3. I INDICATED FURTHER THAT WE WERE SHOCKED THAT A DC GOVER-
NMENT INVITED A DOCTOR FROM HANOI TO HELP. THAT IS AN EMB-
ARRASSMENT TO US. FORLANI SAID MINISTER OF HEALTH DEL FALCO
WAS MANEUVERED INTO CORNER BY TWO PCI SENATORS AND GIVEN THE
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PAGE 02 ROME 12928 091808Z

PRESS DRAMATIZATION OF THE CRISIS, BELIEVED HE COULD NOT

REFUSE TO INVITE THE VIETNAMESE. FORTUNATELY, RESPONSE FROM
HANOI HAD BEEN RECEIVED TO EFFECT THERE LITTLE VIETNAMESE
DOCTOR COULD DO AND THAT IF
HE DID COME, IT WOULD NOT BE BEFORE OCTOBER. I TOLD FORLANI
INVITATION WOULD NOT SET WELL WITH ITALY'S FRIENDS IN WASHING-
TON. FORLANI SAID HE APPRECIATED OUR EMBARRASSMENT BUT SAID
THAT ONCE THINGS SETTLE DOWN THERE WILL BE TIME TO INFORM
HANOI THAT THE ITALIANS HAVE A PLAN AND THAT THERE IS NO
NEED FOR THE VIETNAMESE TO COME. VOLPE

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS, DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS, RELATIONS WITH REGIONAL ORGS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 09 AUG 1976
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: MartinML
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1976ROME12928
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: D760306-0701
From: ROME
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1976/newtext/t19760872/aaaacknd.tel
Line Count: 70
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Office: ACTION EUR
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: MartinML
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 03 MAY 2004
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <03 MAY 2004 by izenbei0>; APPROVED <28 JUL 2004 by MartinML>
Review Markings:

Margaret P. Grafeld
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
04 MAY 2006

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: DIPLOMATIC DISCUSSIONS WITH NEW FONMIN FORLANI
TAGS: SENV, IT, US, NATO, (FORLANI, ARNALDO)
To: STATE
Type: TE
Markings: Margaret P. Grafeld Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 04 MAY 2006